

Polit. Pamph. vol 137.

AN
ADDRESS
TO
THE PEOPLE
OF
ENGLAND. *K*

*Est optime constituta, & publica, quae in rebus, quibus illis, regali,
optimo, et populari, sit modice confusa.*

Cicero de Leg.

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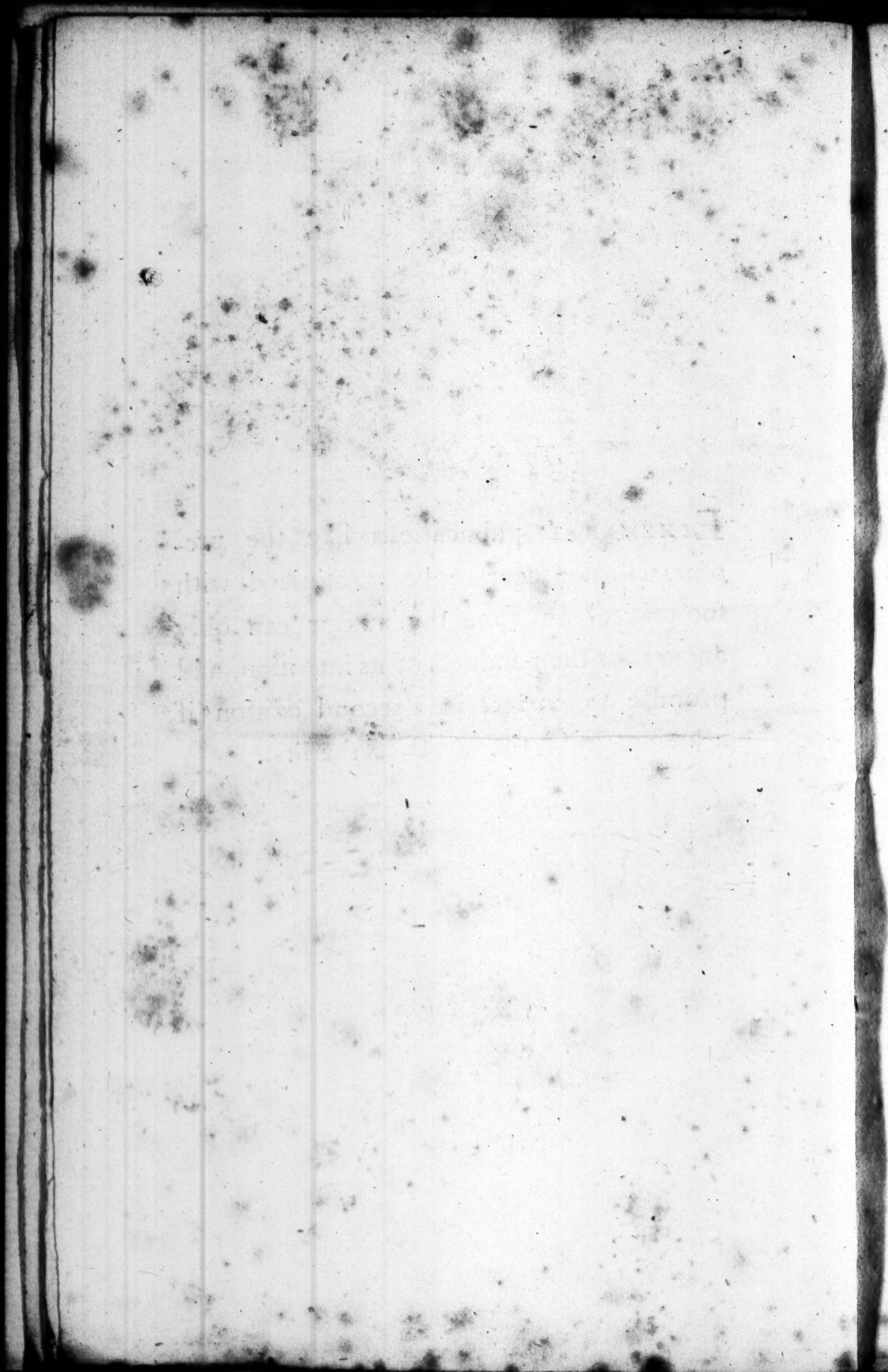
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To the Reader.

EPHEMERAL publications like the present, will not bear to be scrutinized with too critical an eye; the author can only answer for the goodness of its intention, and promise to correct in a second edition (if it arrives at it) the errors of the first.



AN ADDRESS, &c.

THAT there has long been in this country a body of men, brewing mischief and spreading discontent, to serve the purposes of their own ambition, is not to be doubted. Some have been harsh and uncandid enough, to charge the Dissenter with such designs. But there is not a more respectable character, than the rational and conscientious Dissenter: and we should be cautious how we seem to attach any opprobrium to that denomination, for by this means, we only irritate them, and incite a spirit of persecution in ourselves. We of the church of England were in fact dissenters from the church of Rome, and should readily grant the liberty we have so freely taken. To separate this respectable character, from another ambitious and unprincipled one, which I shall call *the Renegado*, shall be my first object. The rational and conscientious Dissenter, is one who in his religious opinions differs from the church of England, in regard to some ceremonies observed; and in the construction put

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upon

upon some passages of Scripture. In many so narrow is the bound of separation, that it were to be wished they would lean a little towards us, and become "not only almost but altogether such as we are." In his political opinion he considers himself as lying under a sort of undeserved proscription, and as being denied privileges to which every loyal and peaceable citizen is entitled. The Renegado on the other hand not only dissents from the church establishment, but does not choose to have any establishment at all: he not only objects to some opinions on Christianity, but to Christianity itself; in common with the Indian he believes there may be a God. In his political sentiments, he does not merely object to the British government, but to every mode of government except an Ochlocracy*; he asserts that those ought to assist in making laws who cannot write, and in expounding them who cannot read. He maintains that things untried must of course be best; he is for reducing religion and government to its primitive state, by calling in the strength of the people to new model both, rejecting the benefit of experience, and denying the utility of example, or the evidence of history. To develope the deep designs of such, to point

* See this word well defined in Sir Walter Raleigh's history of the world, page 154.

out the fallacy of their doctrines, and the speciousness of their arguments; to shew that we have a Constitution worth defending and preserving, to caution the people from becoming the *cat's-paw of ambition*, is the chief design of this pamphlet.

The first point which the Renegado aims at, is, the overthrow of the church establishment: and for this purpose he tells you of the wealth, luxury, and pride of the clergy; of the enormous grievance of tithes; of the inutility of any established form of worship, and of the still greater impropriety of connecting church and state.

To remark first on the wealth of the clergy. From the best calculation I have been able to make, I find that if the revenues of the church were equally divided amongst its members, they would possess an income of about one hundred and eighty pounds per annum each, which cannot be deemed too large an appropriation to the clerical character, or to the maintenance of any man of respectability. But an equal distribution (for certain excellent reasons) is so far from being the case, that there are always above nine thousand clergymen who do not derive an emolument of one hundred pounds a year each from the church. Neither is the number of the clergy so great as to be an unnecessary burden, it being only as one to one hundred and thirty.

In regard to the charge of pride or luxury,

though these faults may sometimes be detected, (by the keen eye of envy), in the college or the cloister, they are seldom found in the mansion of the parish priest. It is for the interest of religion that a clergyman should be independent of the caprice of his parishioners for maintenance, he should have no mean compliances to make, to serve his interest by the sacrifice of his character; and it may be hoped that a regard to his own happiness and to his duty would induce him to conciliate the affections of his parish, by urbanity of manners, and by the practice of benevolence.

The generous Renegado is always endeavouring to abolish the enormous grievance of tithes; conceiving it a noble thing to relieve the poor farmer, who cannot take care of his own interest, from such a burden, and handsomely offering the clergyman a compensation in return. The motives are apparently good and specious, but utterly fallacious, and would be found in the course of a few years trial to reduce the clergy to poverty and insignificance.

The chief causes of complaint against tithes are two. First, that they operate as a check upon agriculture*; and secondly, that they occasion

* I have just read that they prevent the breed of cattle, and are the cause of the present scarcity. This is begging the question with a witness indeed.

disputes between the clergy and laity, to the disgrace and disadvantage of both. To which I answer, that if a farmer could by dint of ingenuity and expence, increase the produce of his farm tenfold, the law circumscribes the advantage of the clergyman: whereas it does not at all prevent the landlord from raising his rent according to his mere will, nor the overseers of the poor from putting on an additional rate: consequently the farmer has as much reason to quarrel with his landlord, or with the poor, as he has with the parson. Again, in the management of the farms of a whole parish, some will increase their produce, others decrease it; common justice surely then would set the gain against the loss; and as in one case, he does not receive *enough*, in the other he ought to get his *full due*, and the law will allow him no more; and here if he gets one tenth, the farmer undoubtedly gains seven tenths. Every obstruction which a farmer throws in the way of a clergyman's receiving his tithes is undoubtedly a piece of injustice and dishonesty, equal to cheating his landlord of his rent, the one being equally secured and confirmed by law as the other, and if quarrels arise to render the clergyman either an adverse or an inefficacious character to the farmer, if the latter is in the wrong, the former is by no means to bear the blame.

blame. But our reformer professes to give a full equivalent for tithes, and when he can, I should no longer withhold my consent. Let us proceed however to shew where he cannot. And this will best be done by reflecting what tithes *have been*, and what they now *are*---uniform in their *value*, and this is more than can be said of any other property whatever. Money has decreased in value by the influx of bullion, and by the extent of trade. But a bushel of corn still keeps its ratio in the barter of commodity ; and what, let me ask, would the state of the clergy be *now*, had they received a sum of money in lieu of tithes two hundred years ago? What will their situation be two hundred years hence, if they consent to a commutation now? If they receive land, they lose an advantage both in value, and in security. Are they expected to become cultivators themselves? Men brought up in studies and pursuits far different? May not this property be lessened by the tax of the Financier, the claims of the poor, the knavery of the tenant impoverishing the land, or his misfortune from loss and want of skill? Whereas in the present case, he has only to take care to get his due before the corn and hay are carried off the land, and this requires no skill in or attendance from him, a person being appointed by law to do justice

justice between him and the farmer. Again let it be observed, that a farmer is too wary a character to take a farm, without first informing himself of every particular respecting it; if he find the tithes or the poor rates amount to five shillings in the pound, he will certainly expect to give the landlord the less rent. It is no hardship upon him therefore to fulfill a condition into which he has entered with his eyes open. Tithes are no new impost, they are well known; they have proved for many centuries, a certain and uniform provision, for the clergy. And shall a measure be altered which has been found in almost every instance to answer the end intended? Will any one engage that the most uninterrupted harmony shall subsist between a clergyman and his parishioners from the moment of the abolition of tithes? Will you take from the aged priest, who has passed a life of restraint, and learning, and assiduity, the simple and easily collected subsistence of his old age, to involve him in business, and subject him to loss and imposition? Clergy of England, let not the innovating hand of the Renegado pull you down from ease and independence, to poverty, trouble, and indistinction. I trust you will never give your consent to an abolition of tithes, and if they are taken from you without it, no man is hereafter safe in the possession of his house or of his garden.

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In defence of an established form of worship, I shall only say briefly, " That if the worship of " God, were left to be performed at any time, " it would be performed at no time." If the sabbath day were not fixed, there would be no sabbath at all. Who that observes the clean-washed faces, and decent garments of the respectable labourer and his family; who that considers the serious and devout appearance of all ranks of people; the good effects of cessation from toil to new brace the sinews of labour, to give a time of reflection to the mind, to afford gratuitous instruction to the children of the poor and illiterate, in their most important concern, but must allow, " that the sabbath was " made for man." And not for man only, but to loose the ox from his yoke, and the horse from his otherwise incessant toil. Who that considers this but will grant that such an institution is worthy of the wisdom of God, and necessary to the well-being of man*.

Let

* The French have sufficiently verified this observation. They abolished the sabbath under the pretence that it was a loss to the community of the seventh part of labour, but they have found it necessary, (partially) to restore it. No advantage was gained, for the want
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Let us now consider the last objection, the impropriety of connecting church and state.

And here I feel myself by no means equal to the discussion of this subject; perhaps it might be better to treat it as Mr. Burke has done, and to infer the excellence of the institution from the excellence of its effects. To assert positively, that the clergy dispersed among the general mass of mankind, operate to instruct their ignorance, and to restrain their passions; to prove from history that such a system has taken place in almost every country. The civil is a check upon, and a support to the ecclesiastical, and *vice versâ*. By the one any ambitious views or improper conduct in the clergy are restrained; by the other the civil power is prevented from degenerating into immorality and profaneness. To pass over the early part of our ecclesiastical establishment, I shall only take notice of what happened at the reformation, from which time it becomes a mutual compact. Sixteen of the clergy and sixteen of the laity were appointed to discuss

of a seventh day's rest, would paralyze the efforts of the other six. Poverty or avarice would lead men to work themselves and their cattle beyond their strength. We shall not say with Mr. Whittaker, that because this is an institution of God himself, man must not dispute it; such arguments would have no effect on Renegadoes.

the business in the reign of Henry the Eighth; it was again discussed in the reign of Edward the Sixth, where the Committee was reduced to eight; it was repealed by Mary, revived and confirmed by Elizabeth *. The protestant religion then, as it was called, became incorporated and established; it certainly continues the religion of the majority.

It is not only the duty, it is also the interest of every state to support, protect, and encourage, that religion which appears to the majority to be the true one †. To expect that all men will ever be of the same opinion in this respect, is visionary; all that other sects can claim, is the fullest and most ample toleration, and that surely they already possess in greater freedom than in almost any other country. I am sorry to say that men are not so open to conviction as they should be in religious investigation: for, as, among the numerous sects now existing in this

* For further information see Plowden's connexion of church and state, and the transactions of the years, 1551, 1563, 1578, 1583.

† Whether it wants a still further reformation, is not for me to determine, but I think I may venture to assert, that when this becomes the opinion of the majority, it ought, and most likely will be done.

country,

country, some *one* must be *nearer the truth* than the rest, if they were open to conviction, more would join themselves together, and would not differ upon points of no importance to real religion and morality. Far be it from any true lover of his country, to take any violent measures to restrain the liberty of thinking, or to interrupt the exercise of any mode of worship, which does not (by tenets encouraging acts of violence, and by the dissemination of sedition), break the laws of the state, and disturb the peace of society. Pity it were, that men who worship the same God, and believe in the same Redeemer should entertain hatred for, and hostility to each other.

I now proceed to the most important part of my subject, the discussion of some political tenets of the Renegado, and to prove that we have a Constitution worth defending, and preserving. Let us enquire first into his favourite doctrine of equality. Equality can never consist in an equalization of property, nor of station. Men *are not born equal*, for at the very moment of their birth, they are unequal in two things, strength of body, and strength of mind. As they approach towards manhood they become unequal in many things; in virtue, education, industry and success. Place two men at maturity in the most

complete state of equality you can conceive, and how long will they continue so ; give to each his house, and his proportion of ground, &c. the one by greater industry, greater capability of labour, greater frugality, or greater skill than the other, will soon render his produce larger, will become richer, and consequently unequal to the other. But moreover we cannot portion out the earth itself, so as to render its division equal ; for as one part of it is richer than the other, one person must have a larger share than the other ; but whoever has the larger portion, only encounters greater degree of labour and difficulty. This argument will I trust be sufficient to counteract every visionary idea of equality with regard to property *.

To every large quantity of property, however acquired, *i. e.* by descent or personally, superior station is attached ; and not to property alone, but to superior natural abilities, greater exertions of prudence, valour, and activity ; greater learned acquirements ; the bestowal of rank is the only appropriate recompence, where wealth is already possessed, and distinction is the spur to honourable action. Has not this been the case

* That some of the French really had this idea, Vide Pétion's work in the Analytical Review.

in all ages of the world? There is another view of general equality highly rational; let this be defined, protection in every just claim, or right appropriate to the station, impartial administration of justice, not in respect to the person, but to the merit or demerit of the object: Security of person and of property, equal laws, coercive alike upon the rich and the powerful, as upon the poor and lowly. Such equality, the only real and reasonable one, will be found in this happy country.

Englishmen have the vanity to boast of their Constitution, and prefer it to that of all other countries. They are not singular in their preference, for they are justified by the opinion of the author of the remark in the title page. Cicero, was eminent as a senator, philosopher, and orator; he had seen the several inconveniences that had attended the several sorts of government. Of the Republic from the decline and miseries of the Grecian Republics, particularly those of Athens and of Carthage. He had seen even in his own, that it was impossible in the Roman state, to assemble the whole body of the people, without some tumult or confusion; it became indispensably necessary for the people to delegate their powers; the Ochlocracy soon became an Oligarchy. In an Aristocracy of five hundred, a few only would be found as the really
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executive body, and a struggle for power is at all times likely to reduce these to one. The inconveniences attending absolute uncontrouled Monarchy, he had learnt not only from the Tarquins, but from all the Monarchs of Greece and Persia. He well knew that a Consul was commonly the leader of an army, and he had seen in Julius Cæsar, that a popular General might easily overthrow the government of his country. The decided judgment then of his reflection and experience was: " That a government composed of a moderate mixture of all the three kinds, Monarchy, Aristocracy, and a delegation arising from popular election, was the best that could be constituted." In addition to an opinion so high, and so valuable, we have that of Polybius *. Such a Constitution refined by the course, and polished by the experience of two thousand years, *we have now before us*; improved by the reason, the researches, and the eloquence of the greatest men of our country, and wrested from tyrants by the blood of the bravest of our ancestors. Permit me to lay it before you, as it

* Polybius tells us, the best government is that which consists of three forms: *Regno, optimatum, et Populi imperio*. The example of Athens and Carthage, plainly shews us, that as much tyranny may be found in the *many* as in the *one*.

now is, and first let me speak of its head ; the hereditary Monarch, chief Magistrate, fountain of Honours, and executive Power, *The King*. On hereditary monarchy no observation of mine can be so good as that of a celebrated historian lately deceased. It is so complete an answer to all objections, that it ought to be universally disseminated.

“ Of the various forms of government, (says he) which have prevailed in the world, an hereditary monarchy ~~SEEMS~~ to present the fairest scope for ridicule. Is it possible to relate, without an indignant smile, that on the father's decease, the property of a nation, like that of a drove of oxen, descends to his infant son, as yet unknown to mankind and to himself ; and that the bravest warriors, and the wisest statesmen, relinquishing their natural right to empire, approach the royal cradle with bended knees and protestations of inviolable fidelity ! Satire and declamation may paint these obvious topics in the most dazzling colours, but our more serious thoughts will respect a useful prejudice, that establishes a rule of succession independent of the passions of mankind ; and we shall cheerfully acquiesce in any expedient which deprives the multitude, of the dangerous, and indeed the ideal power of giving themselves a master. In the cool shade of retirement, we may easily devise imaginary forms of govern-

government, in which the sceptre shall be constantly bestowed on the most worthy, by the free and incorrupt suffrage of the whole community. Experience overturns these airy fabrics, and teaches us, that in a large society, the election of a monarch can never devolve to the wisest, or to the most numerous part of the people. The army is the only order of men sufficiently united to concur in the same sentiments, and powerful enough to impose them on the rest of their fellow-citizens : but the temper of soldiers, habituated at once to violence, and to slavery, renders them very unfit guardians of a legal or even a civil constitution. Justice, humanity, or political wisdom, are qualities they are too little acquainted with in themselves, to appreciate them in others. Valour will acquire their esteem, and liberality will purchase their suffrage ; but the first of these merits is often lodged in the most savage breasts, the latter can only exert itself at the expence of the public ; and both may be turned against the possessor of the throne, by the ambition of a daring rival. *The superior prerogative of birth, when it has obtained the sanction of time and popular opinion, is the plainest and least invidious of all distinctions among mankind.* The acknowledged right extinguishes the hope of faction, and the conscious security disarms the cruelty of the monarch. To the firm establishment of this idea,

we owe the peaceful succession, and mild administration of European monarchies. To the defect of it, we must attribute the frequent civil wars, through which an Asiatic despot is obliged to cut his way to the throne of his fathers. Yet, even in the East, the sphere of contention is usually limited to the princes of the reigning house, and as soon as the more fortunate competitor has removed his brethren, by the sword and the bow-string, he no longer entertains any jealousy of his meaner subjects. But the Roman empire, after the authority of the senate had sunk into contempt, was a vast scene of confusion. The royal, and even noble families of the provinces, had long since been led in triumph before the car of the haughty republicans. The ancient families of Rome had successively fallen beneath the tyranny of the Cæsars; and whilst those princes were shackled by the forms of a commonwealth, and disappointed by the repeated failure of their posterity, it was impossible that any idea of hereditary succession should have taken root in the minds of their subjects. The right to the throne, none could claim from birth, every one assumed from merit. The daring hopes of ambition were set loose from the salutary restraints of law and prejudice; and the means of mankind, might, without folly, entertain a hope of being raised by valour and fortune to a rank in the

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army,

army, in which a single crime would enable him to wrest the sceptre of the world from his feeble and unpopular master. After the murder of Alexander Severus and the elevation of Maximin, no Emperor could think himself safe upon the throne, and every Barbarian peasant of the frontier might aspire to that august, but dangerous station *.

Hereditary monarchy is therefore wisely established to check the ambition of the unprincipled, and to prevent those convulsions in the state, which are almost always the forerunners of destruction to the people. But in England, though the government be hereditary, the monarch assures his people, at his coronation, by a solemn oath, that he will support their religion and liberties; that he is himself of the established religion; that he will protect them in their lives and properties, and allow them the free exercise of all those rights to which the laws of their country entitle them.

“ Let the people dread (it is necessary to the
 “ preservation of their liberty) but let them ne-
 “ ver cease to love, THE THRONE; that sole and
 “ indivisible seat of all the active powers in the
 “ state. Let them know it is that which by lend-

* Gibbon's D. and F. of R. E. Vol. I. chap. vii.

" ing an immense strength to the arm of justice,
 " has enabled her to bring to account as well the
 " most powerful, as the meanest offender. Let
 " them know it is that which leaving to the rich
 " no other security for his palace, than that which
 " the peasant has for his cottage, has united his
 " cause to that of this latter, the cause of the
 " powerful to that of the helpless, the cause of
 " the man of extensive influence and connections,
 " to that of him who is without friends. It is
 " THE THRONE above all, it is that jealous
 " power which makes the people sure, that its
 " Representatives shall never be any thing more
 " than its Representatives; and which by re-
 " pressing the encroachments of ambition, keeps
 " up that ballance of power, without which the
 " three estates could never subist, and conse-
 " quently, the Constitution would be destroy-
 " ed *."

Nor can I quit this part of my subject with-
 out paying the tribute of mere justice to the ex-
 cellent monarch now on the Throne; whether
 we review his private, or his public conduct, it
 is worthy of our warmest attachment. We all
 know what a number of excellent acts of parlia-
 ment have been passed in his reign for the bene-

* De Lolme.

fit of his subjects, many of which originated in his own suggestions. Those intended to secure the freedom of election, and the independence of the judges are more particularly to be noticed. Formerly a judge might be removed from his office at the will of the Crown, now he can only be displaced by some flagrant act of injustice.

All but those who are converts to new-fangled doctrines, unprincipled Renegadoes from good government, must surely do justice to the public, and private conduct of his majesty; must see him discharging with exemplary fidelity, the duties of the monarch and of the man, of the husband and the father, the strict observer of religion, temperance, and morality; and I am convinced that when Republican principles have subsided, and the springs of that personal vanity and ambition now so prevalent are exposed, posterity will do him the justice to say, that no monarch has more thoroughly deserved, or does more amply possess the love and good opinion of his subjects.

Nor is the second branch of the Constitution, the nobility of England, useless; it constitutes a supreme court of judicature, has a share in the enacting of laws, and always acts as an hereditary counsel to the crown. Most of these nobles have derived their venerable titles from the valour or the wisdom of their ancestors; nor are they

they now more distinguished from one another by degrees of rank, than by superior abilities and virtues.

Of the utility of the third branch of the Constitution, the elected representatives of people of landed property however small, (for let it be observed, *landed property alone* as being fixed, and permanent, and corporate bodies for the same reason, are allowed to be represented) the people themselves conceive they can judge; and surely by setting the power of voting at forty shillings per annum, it is brought down to as low a standard as possible. It would be unnecessary and superfluous to enumerate here the several advantages derived from it. The greatest however I take to be these, that all acts or laws are fully and severely investigated by it. That the arguments for or against any proposition are laid before the whole body of the people, many of whom are as competent from their abilities and information to judge of them, as the framers themselves. No act therefore, of manifest injustice or visible absurdity could stand its ground; every act (we know), every question is thoroughly sifted and inquired into, and is liable to rejection, correction, and repeal. They keep also the purse of the nation, therefore the sinews of government are in the hands of the people's Representatives, and if the people elect those a second time, who
have

have deceived them a first, it is their own fault, Not only the laws of England, but also the manner of their administration, is superior to that of all other countries. Every cause is left to the arbitration of twelve dispassionate, disinterested men, approved by the person himself applying for justice. No privacy in the framing of laws, no privacy in their execution. If they may be said to be too complex or dilatory, and of course expensive, the fault is not in them, but in the time often requisite to be taken, to discover the truth; and the extreme difficulty of drawing up a written document which shall apply to, and take in all cases; and which the ingenuity of men, whose only study is deception, shall not find means to evade. Add to this that every accused undergoes as it were three trials, the first before a magistrate, to whom he is likely to be well known; the second when his case is laid before an independent respectable grand jury of his country; and the third before a judge (a stranger to him), by law appointed his counsel; and a jury of his equals. Such is briefly part of the Constitution of this country; may it ever continue unshaken. Let the common people (if they are dissatisfied with it), attend, as they may do at any time, the courts of justice. The laws are known, they protect and determine the rights of every man, they know no personal favour, they are of
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no private interpretation, they act on precedent, and are never personal, they are *equal*. They point out modes of redressing every grievance, but they allow no man, nor bodies of men to act and judge in their own case. All those therefore whose personal vanity, spleen, turbulence, or folly, would lead them to any reform except in the manner and through the means which the laws have pointed out, are enemies to their country, beginners of strife, scattering firebrands, to be quenched only by the blood of the people. Grant that this most excellent Constitution has its faults (for what human institution has not ?) it contains in itself principles and means of self correction, it has reformed some errors, and will proceed to reform any others. " There can no inconvenience be attempted by either of the three branches, but " will be withstood by *one of the other two* ; " each branch being armed with a negative " power, sufficient to repel any innovation, " which it shall think inexpedient or dangerous *." *Parliamentary reform* translated into the *Renegado language* means *personal ambition*, it would create a fourth estate, unknown to the laws, and what would this be but a dissolution

of the Constitution *. *A reform of the electors themselves is the best, the readiest, and the wisest.* Let every writer stir up in the minds of the people, a love not of themselves, and of their own selfish interest, but of their country.

Vincet amor patriæ, laudumque immensa cupido.

Virgil.

Let us never hear that such an election would cost a man twenty thousand pounds ; let us see no more flying the badges of party, let *English freeholders* disdain to have their palates tickled with another man's luxury, or their brains intoxicated by his profusion. *Electors reform yourselves*, choose only the *wise, the virtuous and the independent* ; and let it be your boast that it shall cost them *nothing* ; they will not then dare to deceive you, they will then really be your delegates and representatives, and never can become your purchasers and betrayers.

Be it the pride of every Briton not only to support the Constitution of his country, but to be extremely cautious lest he do any thing

* If such boroughs as old Sarum or Gatton want reformation, parliament is the best judge of the proper time, manner, and compensation. The Renegado never considers, that when he would adorn the edifice with a new window, he may pull the old house over his head.

which

which may eventually tend to weaken, or destroy it. Respectable labourers! industrious mechanics! for whose comfort and protection, laws have been framed, and are continually framing, will you raise an arm to smite down this beautiful fabric of civil and religious order; raised by the strength, the blood, and the wisdom of your ancestors? Will you tear your brethren in pieces for a paltry difference of opinion? Will you be made the tools of the artful, the designing, the unprincipled and the ambitious, to tear out with sanguinary hands, the entrails of your mother country? Will you not rather sacrifice such miscreants who would thus inflame, and trepan you, to the insulted, and injured laws of your darling and still happy country.

F I N I S.

